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A SUMERAN CUSTOM AND ITS HISTORIC INDIAN PARALLELS

BY DR. B. A. SALETORÉ, M. A., PH.D. (LOND.)

That there was a close intercourse between the Indus valley and Mesopotamia and Elam there can hardly be any doubt. The assertion of Sir Arthur Keith that the ancient Sumerian civilization can be traced until the Indus⁽¹⁾ is reached is amply substantiated by the many features of a general order which Sir John Marshall gives concerning the similarity of the second Pre-diluvian culture of Elam and Sumer and of the proto-historic culture of the Indus valley⁽²⁾.

The object of this paper is not to dwell on the many points of resemblance between the Indus valley culture and the early Sumerian culture,⁽³⁾ but to describe a singular Sumerian custom and its Indian parallels in historical times. This refers to the death of a Sumerian king when his followers, attendants, soldiers, and his queens died along with him. Mr. Leonard Woolley has found some definite evidence at Ur of large human sacrifices accompanying the burial of important personages. But here it is worth while to qualify my statements in the words of Mr. C. J. Gadd who, through the courtesy of Dr. L. D. Barnett, informs me the following :—

That there is as yet no other known case of large human sacrifices accompanying the burial of important personages, that

(1) Sir Arthur Keith in Hall and Woolley, *Al 'Ubaid*, I. pp 216-240. (Oxford, 1927).

(2) Sir John Marshall, *Mohenjo-daro and Indus Civilization*, I, p. 102. (London, 1931.) Mr Leonard Woolley had dwelt on the identification of the Indus valley civilization with that of Sumer earlier. *The Sumerians*, pp. 8-9, (Oxford, 1928). Sir John Marshall dates this intercourse to the close of the fourth millennium B. C. when Mohenjo-daro and Harappā were at the height of their prosperity. Marshall, *ibid.* But Dr. H. Frankfurt challenges the date given to the finds at Mohenjo daro. *Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology* for 1932, pp. 1-12. (Leyden, 1934). According to Dr. Frankfurt there is a similarity between the finds at Mohenjo-daro and those in the Akkadian city of Tell Asmar (B.C. 2500). B. A. S.

(3) For details read Marshall, *op. cit.*, I. pp. 104-105.

there is no hint of it in any of the texts, and that it is not quite certain whether the personages in question were kings and queens.⁽⁴⁾

Nevertheless we may provisionally accept the description of the above custom as given by Mr. Wooley. The burial of the Sumerian kings was accompanied by human sacrifices on a lavish scale, the bottom of the grave pit being crowded with the bodies of men and women who seemed to have been brought down here and butchered where they stood. In one grave the soldiers of the guard, wearing copper helmets and carrying spears, lie at the foot of the sloped *dromos* which led down into the grave; against the end of the tomb chamber are nine ladies of the court with elaborate golden dresses; in front of the entrance are drawn up two heavy four wheeled carts with three bullocks harnessed to each, and the driver's bones lie in the carts and the grooms are by the heads of the animals; in another grave, that of Queen Shub-ad, the court ladies are in two parallel rows, at the end of which is the harpist with a harp of inlay work decorated with a calf's head in lapis lazuli and gold. Mr. Woolley writes that in no known text is there anything that hints at human sacrifices of this sort, nor has archaeology discovered any traces of such a custom or any survival of it in a later age.⁽⁵⁾

Mr. Woolley also describes the contents of the grave of a prince, Mes-Kalam-dug, belonging to the latter part of the cemetery period. The prince wore a complete head-dress or helmet of beaten gold in the form of a wig; and with the body were two plain bowls and a shell-shaped lamp of gold, each inscribed with the name of the prince; a dagger with gold blade and two axes of electrum lay by his side. His personal ornament included a bracelet of triangular beads of gold and lapis lazuli, hundreds of other beads in the same materials, earrings and bracelets of gold and silver, a gold bull amulet and lapis lazuli amulet in the form of a seated calf, two silver lamps shaped as shells, and a gold pin with lapis head. Outside the coffin the offerings were more numerous. The finest of them was a gold bowl, fluted and engraved, with small handles of lapis lazuli; by this lay a silver libation jug and a palter; there were some fifty cups and bowls of silver and copper and a great number of weapons, a gold mounted spear, daggers with hilts decorated with

(4) Mr. C. J. Gadd's letter to Dr. Barnett dated 21-4-1935.

(5) Woolley, *The Sumerians*, pp. 39-40.

silver and gold, copper spears, axes and adzes, and a set of arrows with triangular flint heads. (6)

These graves, it may be noted in passing, have been assigned by Mr. Woolley to B. C. 3500.

Before proceeding further we may note the following features concerning the royal graves at Ur :—

In the first place, the kings died with their personal ornaments on their bodies ;

Secondly, their wives, soldiers, attendants and followers died along with them ;

Thirdly, some articles which were evidently of daily use and weapons were interred with them ; and

Finally, animals were sacrificed on the death of kings.

Are there any traces of the above Sumerian customs in the finds at Mohenjo-daro and Harappā ? Sir John Marshall answering the question—How did the Indus people dispose of their dead ?—replies thus :—“A complete and decisive answer to this question cannot yet be given. At Mohenjo-daro the evidence is as yet too meagre and in some instances obscure. At Harappā it is more abundant but most of it relates to the latest period of occupation, when Mohenjo-daro had probably ceased to exist, and when the population of Harappā itself may have already undergone great racial changes ”.(7)

But all the same it is interesting to observe that with the twenty-one skeletons discovered at Mohenjo-daro were found a variety of personal ornaments, some of which still encircled the

(6) *Ibid.*, p. 184. Mr. A. Forestier has depicted the death of Queen Shub-ad which is imaginary but based on archaeological evidence, in *The Illustrated London News* for 1928. This has been reproduced in *The Royal Cemetery*, 11 plate 30. *The Antiquaries Journal* for October, 1928, Vol VIII. P. 4 may also be consulted for a complete account of the Queen Shub-ad finds. I am indebted to Mr. Gadd for the reference to *The Royal Cemetery*. B. A. S.

(7) Marshall, *op. cit.* I. p. 79.

tombs, *viz.*, shell and copper bracelets, copper finger rings, copper and faience beads and seals. In the opinion of the excavator, Mr. Hargreaves, the varied attitudes of the skeletons point to a simultaneous death.⁽⁸⁾

No definite inference can be drawn from the above data, but the presence of a variety of personal ornaments suggests that one of the features of the burial of a Sumerian prince may have also marked the death of a prince in the Indus valley. This is a mere conjecture, since there is nothing to prove that the skeletons in question belonged to princes or kings.

The contents of area G at Harappā, however, comprise not only some fifteen skulls but also a quantity of other animal bones together with several tall offerings' stands, drinking goblets, and a variety of other earthenware. According to the excavator Mr. M. S. Vats, the skulls here "are of victims sacrificed on the occasion perhaps of some funeral ; but he advances this suggestion as nothing more than a surmise".⁽⁹⁾

The finds in these fractional burials, as they are called by the excavators at Mohenjo-daro and Harappā, are similar to the finds discovered by Mr N. G. Majumdar on the hill Damb Buthi in Larkhana in Sind. In one of the chambers on the hill Mr. Majumdar found a group of pottery articles together with human skeleton remains. A feature which is common to the burials at Dumb Buthi, Mohenjo-daro, Nal, and Musyam in Persia is the rectangular stone enclosure for the burial of the dead.⁽¹⁰⁾

II

The above evidence from Mohenjo-daro, Harappā, and Dumb Buthi may seem to be rather not so convincing as the following instances of the survivals of the Sumerian custom in comparatively recent times. These refer to the Karnāṭaka and Assam and deal with a period which extends from the first quarter of the tenth century A. D. to the first quarter of the nineteenth century A. D.

(8) *Ibid.*

(9) Marshall, *op. cit.* I. p. 84. See also *ibid.*, p. 81 where animal bones have been found. But these burials are said to be later than the Indus period as represented at Mohenjo-daro.

(10) N. G. Majumdar, *Explorations in Sind*, pp. 115-116. Read also *ibid.* p. 117 for a description of the pottery found in Dumb Buthi. (Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 48, Delhi, 1934.)

The earliest historical examples of the prevalence of the Sumerian custom is in the reign of the Ganga king Nitimārgga Ereyāṅga, Rāya Vikramayya, the son of Rājamalla. The Dodda Hunḍi stone inscription which describes the death of Nitimārgga (circa A.D. 910) is of unique interest. It contains a bas-relief with the following details :—the upper part of the front of the stone is occupied by sculptures illustrating the scene of the death of the king Nitimārgga. He is shown as lying on a couch from the back of which there stand up two royal umbrellas. Near his head there stands his eldest son Satyavākya, the future Rājamalla II, with one similar umbrella behind him. And on the couch is seated a follower of the king, named Agarayya, who is represented as supporting across his knees the legs of the dying ruler, and as holding with his right hand a dagger which he seems to be drawing out with a view to kill himself.⁽¹¹⁾ This method of dying along with a royal master was called in the Karnāṭaka *kil-gunṭe* which Lewis Rice explained thus :—A custom according to which vows were taken by devoted followers not to survive their royal masters. The word itself means the following—*kil* or below or under, and *gunṭe* (by euphony *gunṭhe* [gundī ?]) being connected with *kunṭi*, a pit, or a grave. The votary was rather cremated in the fire-pit under the body of his master or buried below him in the grave, whichever was the mode of disposing of the body.⁽¹²⁾

Two points may be noted in the above Dodda Hunḍi bas-relief before we enumerate other instances of *kil-gunṭe* in the history of the Karanāṭaka. The first is that the royal servant Agarayya died along with his master. It was because of this act of loyalty and affection on his part that, as is narrated in the inscription below the bas-relief, the king's son Satyavākya gave a grant of uncultivated lands to Agarayya's relatives. And, secondly, the bas-relief, clearly depicts a rectangular stone enclosure for the burial of the Gaṅga king.⁽¹³⁾ This rectangular enclosure strikingly recalls that found at Dumb Buthi, Mohenjo-daro and Musyan.

(11) *Epigraphia Carnatica*, III. TN. 91 ; *ibid* V. B1. 112 ; *Epigraphia Indica*, VI. pp. 44-45. Fleet's assumption that Agarayya drew out the sword from the left side of the ruler seems to be far-fetched. B. A. S.

(12) *E. C.* XI. p. 73, n. (1). Fleet's explanation of the term *kil-gunṭe* (*E. I.* VI. pp. *ibid*) seems to be, as Rice remarks, "very wide of the mark". *E. C.* XI, *ibid*.

(13) See Rice, *Mysore and Coorg from the Inscriptions*, p. 42 for a photograph of this bas-relief.

Of about the same age as the bas-relief mentioned above is another instance of a loyal servant dying along with his royal master. This is determined from a damaged *viragal* (or a hero memorial stone) found near the *Īśvara* temple at Nandagudi in the Malebennūru hobli, Dāvanagere tāluka, Mysore State. It is dated in A. D. 930, and it relates the following—that when the (Rāstrakūṭa) king Suvarṇavarṣa (Govinda IV) was ruling, and Baradhēga was placed over the Kadambalige Thousand, a certain Candi....., born in the Gaṅga-vamśa, and also described as ruling over a territory, died. Upon which the servant of his shining feet (belavaḍica) Alliga was buried under him. (14)

Another *viragal* found in the Siddēśvara temple at Belagutti, Belagutti hobli, Honnāli tāluka, likewise depicts the death of a devoted servant along with his royal master. In A. D. 1130 the Kadamba king Tailapa Deva died. "On which the champion of the twelve, Daśarasa's *tañtrapāla*, Maṣaṇayya's youngest brother Boppana (with other titles), making good his word (given) for the occasion (*vēle-vākyam*) went to *svargga* along with Tailapa Deva." (15)

A third instance of the above Sumerian custom is given in the *viragal* discovered on a tank bund at Āsandi in the Kaḍūr tāluka. This record contains only the following chronological details—*Caitra Śuddha Saptemi*, and it has been assigned by Rice to A. D. 1180. According to this *viragal* Bammārāsa Deva of Āsandi died in the siege of Indra's Amarāvati. His servant Bammaya Nāyaka (with various epithets) "showed the way to *svargga*" (i.e., died along with his master). (16)

A more graphic description of a Karnāṭaka noble dying along with his royal patron, this time the queen herself, is given in the *viragal* found near the Trimurti temple at Bāṇanike, Shikarpura tāluka. This *viragal* is dated A. D. 1185. When the senior queen Laccala Devī of the western Cālukya monarch

(14) *E. C.* XI Dg. 119, p. 73. In a note (*Ibid*, Intr p. 8. n. 2) Rice suggests that Candi..... may stand for Candiyarasa mentioned in Cd. 24 which he dates to circa A. D. 500. This is impossible: either we have to date Cd. 24 to circa A. D. 930 or the Candi..... mentioned above refers to another personage. B. A. S.

(15) *E. C.* VII HI. 47, pp. 168-169

(16) *Ibid*, VI. kd. 146, p. 28.

Tribhuvannamalla Someśvara, died, "fulfilling the vow he had previously uttered", and saying "I will die with the Devī", the great Boka died. "On his master calling him saying 'You are the brave man, who with the resolution have spoken of taking off your head,' with no light courage Boka gave his head, while the world applauded saying "He did so at the very instant!" (17)

In A. D. 1220 we have a most remarkable example of the Sumerian custom in the Karnāṭaka. It refers to the unrivalled performance of the great general Kuvara Lakṣma, also called Kuvara Lakkaya, and Kumāra Lakṣmīdhara, in the reign of the Hoysala king Vīra Ballāla Deva II. Kuvara Lakṣma was also the minister of the same ruler. But "between servant and king there was no difference, the glory and marks of royalty were equal in both." The record which gives us these and other details, after praising Kuvara Lakṣma for his bravery, narrates that "he gave his word to king Ballāla that he would keep him free from fear. Not like ministers who, binding a *tōḷār* on the leg as a decoration, guarding the wealth they obtain as of fearing to lose it, taking good care of their persons, in the time of trouble to their master accept service under family,—he remained faithful to Ballāla in all circumstances." The great general had a gallant band of 1000 chosen warriors bound to him by an oath. On the death of Ballāla II, Kuvara Lakṣma deemed it fit to show his loyalty, and he with "his (1000) warriors, his beloved wife (Suggala Devī) and himself having with him surrendered their whole life to their ruler mounted up the splendid stone pillar covered with the poetical *vīra-śāsanas* " and died.(18)

A still more magnificent record is that of the great family of Nāyakas whose brave deeds are described in two stone inscriptions in the Huṇaseśvara temple at Agrahāra Bācanahalli, Hosaholalu, Kṛṣṇarājapet tāluka. The earlier of these inscriptions refers to the reign of the Hoysala king Someśvara Deva. Under the ruler was Kannaya Nāyaka whose loyalty as well as that of

(17) *Ibid.*, VII. Sk. 249, p. 141.

(18) *E. C. V. P. I.* B1. 112, pp. 71-74; Fleet, *Pali Sanscrit Old Canarese Inscriptions*, No. 235, p. 28; Salatore, *Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagara Empire*, II. p. 249.

his wives and of his father and grandfather is thus described in the stone inscription :—

To Gaṇḍa Nārāyaṇa Śeṭṭi (with many epithets) and Maravve Nāyakiti was born Hoysala Seṭṭi. To him and to Macavve Nāyakiti was born the brave Kūreyanāya Nāyaka, to whom and to Maravve Nāyakiti was born Śivaneya Nāyaka, who with five of his servants, fulfilled his engagement (vow) with Ballāla Deva. Lakkaya Nāyaka with his wife Gaṅgā Devī and three servants fulfilled his engagement with Narasiṃha Deva. In the Śaka year specified (A. D. 1257) Kanneya Nāyaka with his wives Ummavve, Javanavve, and Kallavve, and with ten maid-servants and twenty-one man servants, six times embraced the Garuḍa (or from) the head of an elephant and fulfilled his engagement with Someśvara Deva.

The other stone inscription dated A.D. 1292 continues the story of this celebrated family of the Nāyakas. Someśvara Deva's successor was Narasiṃha Deva III. Kanneya Nāyaka's son was Śingeya Nāyaka who along with his three wives Kēṭavve, Honnavve, and Nācavve and with ten maid-servants and twenty man-servants on (from) the head of an elephant six times embraced Garuḍa and fulfilled his engagement with Narasiṃha Deva. ⁽¹⁹⁾

The following table will make the sacrifice of the Nāyaka family of Gaṇḍa Nārāyaṇa Śeṭṭi clear :—

| Hoysala ruler | The Nayaka chief |
|--|---|
| Pallaia Deva II (A.D. 1173-1220) | Śivaneya Nāyaka with five servants. |
| Narasimha Deva II (A.D. 1220-1257) | Lakkayya Nāyaka with his wife and three servants |
| Someśvara Deva (A.D. 1233-1257) | Kanneya Nāyaka with his three wives, ten maid-servants, and twenty-one man-servants |
| Narasimha Deva III (A.D. 1257-1291) | Śingeya Nāyaka with his three wives, ten maid-servants, and twenty man-servants. |

We may observe here that these incidents relating to the Nāyakas are illustrated on three pillars of the same Huṇaseśvara temple. The pillars are tall with flat capitals, each bearing the figure of an elephant, about three feet long, with a figure of Garuḍa as the mahout, and three or four people riding on each. At the bases of these pillars are the inscriptions which give us the above information. ⁽²⁰⁾

We may be permitted to note here that there is one more point of identity between Sumer and the Karnāṭaka. This refers to the veneration in which the well known bird called *Gaṇḍa-bhe-runda* was held both in Sumer and Karnāṭaka. ⁽²¹⁾

III

⌈ In Assam too the Sumerian custom of royal burial prevailed almost till the end of the nineteenth century A. D. Khāfi Khān, the Muhammadan historian of the reign of Aurangzeb, writes thus, while dealing with the extension of the Mughal arms into the Ahom territory:—"When the Rāja of that country (i.e., of Assam) or a great zamindar dies, they dig a large tomb or apartment in the earth, and in it they place his wives and concubines, as also his horses and equipage, carpets, vessels of gold and silver, grain, etc., all such things as are used in that country, the jewels worn by wives and nobles, perfumes, and fruit, sufficient to last for several days. These they call provisions for his journey to the

(20) *Ibid*, Intr. p. 37. The poet Śaḍakṣari Deva (A.D. 1655) in his *Rājasekharavilāsa* describes how on the death of his child born of the princess Tirukolavināciya, the king Rājendrasēkhara, after performing prince's obsequies, committed suicide. And his ministers and other officers and followers too died along with their ruler. *Karnāṭaka Kavīcarite*, II. p. 443. I am indebted to Mr. G. N. Saletore for this reference.

This particular mode of death, it may incidentally be noted, is not met with in the Tamil works, although another kind of burial, similar to the one which seems to have been prevalent in the Indus valley, is mentioned by early Tamil writers. In the *Maṇimekhalai*, for instance five kinds of burial are given. The last mode in which corpses were left covered over by huge earthen pots, is somewhat similar to the one said to have existed in the Indus valley. Read, S. K. Aiyangar, *Maṇimekhalai*, pp. 125-126, (Madras, 1928). B. A. S.

(21) Marshall, *Guide to Taxila*, p. 74 ; R. N. Saletore, *Vijayanagara Art*, p. 463 (Ms. copy, Bombay, 1930).

next world, and when they are all collected the door is closed upon them.”⁽²²⁾

Clayton discovered the following in the grave of the Ahom noble Burra Ghohain, who committed suicide on hearing the news of the arrival of his rival Bar Phukan:—the occupants of the grave, personal ornaments, rings, tooth-pick case, etc., placed near or under the coffin but on the platform of the *muchan* were placed the eating, drinking, or cooking vessels, made of brass or copper.⁽²³⁾

That such a custom should have prevailed in Assam in about A. D. 1810-11 when Burra Ghohain is supposed to have died is rather strange, especially when we remember that, according to tradition, the Ahom king Cukumpha *alias* Rudra Singh (A. D. 1665) had prohibited the burying alive of his queens, guards, attendants, slaves, elephants, etc., at his decease.⁽²⁴⁾

[The prevalence of the Sumerian custom in Assam and the Karnāṭaka, in historical times, suggests some sort of affinity between the cultures of Assam and the Karnāṭaka on the one hand, and between that of these two provinces of India and of Sumer on the other. What precisely are the points of identity, it cannot be made out for the present. But it is not impossible that archaeological finds, as for instance at Candravalli in the

(22) Elliot Dawson, *History of India as told by her own Historians* VII. pp. 264-265.

(23) Clayton, C. Sergeant, Description of the Tomb of an Ahom noble, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, XVII. pp. 473-474. We may note here the total absence of iron work in the shape of nails, bolts, and other fastenings from every part of the grave. *Ibid.*, p. 474.

(24) Clayton *ibid.*, p. 475. For a detailed account of the Ahom burial, read S. K. Bhuyan, *Deodhai Assam Burhanji*, pp. XVI, 142-146 (Gauhati, 1932). The Burra Ghohain referred to by Clayton is evidently Purnananda Buragohain, the great minister of Candrakānta Singha (A. D. 1811—A. D. 1818); and the Bar Phukan, Badanacandra Barphukan. The incident alluded to by Clayton is mentioned in *Tungkhungia Buranji*, pp. XXIII, 201—seq. (Compiled, edited and translated by Prof S K Bhuyan, Oxford Uny. Press, 1933). The *Tungkhungia Buranji* merely states that Purnananda Buragohain breathed his last. *Ibid.*, p. 204. Professor Bhuyan says that he died accidentally of fever. *Ibid.*, Intr. p. XXIII. B. A. S.

Mysore State,⁽²⁵⁾ may reveal an altogether new vista of inquiry in this direction. As regards Assam, we do not know what prehistoric treasures this extremely interesting but uninvestigated province contains.⁽²⁶⁾

(25) For a detailed account of the finds at Chandravalli read, Dr. Krishna's *Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department for 1930*, pp. 23-27; *Archaeological Survey of Mysore-Excavations at Chandravalli* (Issued as a Supplement to the Annual Report for 1929), p. 14 seq.

(26) According to Sir John Marshall the Indus civilization, so far as the present state of investigations are concerned, does not seem to have extended beyond the Gulf of Cambay in the south east, Rajputana in the south, and the land watered by the Indus on the east. Marshall *op. cit.*, I. pp 95-96.

MAHARAJA PRTHU.

(BY JOGENDRA CHANDRA GHOSH.)

About six years ago, we suggested that Viśākhadatta, the author of the *Mudra-lāṅkāśa*, might be an inhabitant of northern Bengal, and his patron and overlord Avantivarman, an immediate descendant of King Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarupa (J. A. S. B. N. S. Vol. XXVI. p. 244). This theory of ours has since been supported by the learned editor of this Journal in his *History of Kāmarupa*. (p 109). He has pointed out therein that the *Mlecchas* referred to in the last verse of the drama were no other than the *Mleccha* dynasty, which came after the dynasty of Bhāskaravarman. We have just lighted upon a piece of corroborative evidence, which, although published about a century ago, was not known to us. This is the account by Buchanan, which was published by Allen, in 1838 A. D. under the editorship of Montgomery Martin. The following is an extract from the summary of the above account on the antiquities of the Rangpur district, as given by Firminger in his *Bengal District Records*—Rangpur, Vol. I. 1770-1779., pp. 7 8) :—

“ In the dim mist of the past, where mythology and history coalesce, Rangpur was included in the kingdom of Kamrup, and the Kūrutīya was the boundary between Kamrup and Matsya or

Bengal. The Rajah Bhagadatta, in the war of the Mahabharat, espoused the side of Dhariyudhan, and was killed by Arjuna. Besides Rungpore, Kamrup included Assam, Munipure, Jyntea, Cacar and parts of Mymensingh and Sylhet.

The derivation of the name Rungpore is said to be রঙ্গপুর (Rangapur), the place of pleasure or abode of bliss—Bhagadatta having here a country residence on the Ghaghat. There is another Rungpore in Assam, west of Gowhatty, the Kamrup capital which also lays claim to the same distinction. Pergunnah Pyrabund, which lies south and west from Gaghata a few miles only from Rungpore town, is called after Pyravati, the daughter of Bhagadatta, who held it as an estate.

According to the doubtful authority of the Ayeen Akbery Bhagadatta had twenty-three successors in his dynasty; and the Yogini Tantra gives some very misty accounts of subsequent kings. Among them is Jalpeshvar, who built the temple of Śiva at Jalpesh, in the Dooars; but putting asides these legends, made up according to the fancy of the annalist, we have genuine local traditions of three dynasties that reigned in Rungpore previous to the close of the fifteenth century.

Of the earliest dynasty, there is trace only of one Prithu Rajah. The ruins of his city lie half in Chakla Boda, half in Pergunnah Bykuntpore, in the present district of Julpigoree. The city consisted of four enclosures, one within the other; the innermost containing the Rajah's palace. In both the inner and middle cities were subdivisions, separated by each other by ramparts and ditches, dividing each city into quarters. The outermost city of all was tenanted by the lowest class of populace. The place was strongly fortified for the times in which it was built; the defence were lofty earthy ramparts, with wide moats on the outsides and advantage was taken of a small river, the Talma, to form a deep fosse under the embankment, between the middle and outer cities. In some places the earthen defences were faced with brick, and surmounted by brickwalls; the Rajah's house also a wall around it. The only remains left are portions of the ramparts and heaps of bricks in various places.

This Prithu Rajah met a tragical fate. He was attacked by a tribe of Kichoks, or impure feeding gipsies, and afraid of having his purity sullied by contact with them, he jumped into the large tank near his palace, whither he was followed by his guards, and the town was given up to plunder. His spirit was supposed to

occupy the place, and when Buchanan visited it a flag was hoisted on the ground between the tank and the palace, which was overgrown with trees and bushes, to indicate that the spot was holy, and the guides bowed down low and called on the Maharaja Prithu by name."

The next dynasty, he describes, is that of the Palas of Bengal, (eighth century A. D.)

Rai K. L. Barua Bahadur, in his *Early History of Kāmarupa* (pp. 223-228), following Sir Wolseley Haig, identifies this Pr̥thu with one Bartu, of whom a solitary Muhammedan historian, viz., Minhaj says.—"The accursed Bartu beneath whose sword above a hundred and twenty thousand Mussalmans had attained martyrdom he (Nasiruddin) overthrew and sent to hell; and the refractory infidels, who were in different parts of the country of Awadh, he reduced and overcame and brought a considerable number under obedience." He further thinks that this Bartu is the same as Jalpeswar, a king of Kāmarupa, who is said to have founded the temple of Śiva named Jalpisa in Jalpaiguri.

Even assuming that this Bartu was a king of Kāmarupa and not of Oudh, and that the name of 'Pr̥thu' has been distorted into 'Bartu' by Minhaj, there is difficulty in taking this Bartu to be identical with Pr̥thu of Buchanan's account. The tradition does not connect the sad end of Maharaja Pr̥thu with the Muhammedans, but with the Kicakas. It is unlikely that the local people should confound Kicakas with Muhammadans.

Rai Bahadur says that the capital of Bartu-Prithu was in North-Gauhati, in the vicinity of which he repulsed both Bakhtiyar and Iwaz. The fortifications in Jalpaiguri were erected by him after the retirement of Bakhtiyar, in order to offer stronger resistance to an invader at the entrance to his kingdom. Let us see if this part of the country on the western bank of the Brahmaputra was comprised within Kāmarupa in the thirteenth century. The country to the north of Varendra and near Virata was known as Nivṛtti (Des. Cat. A. S. B. Vol. IV, pp. 60-61; N. L. De's *Geographical Dictionary*). According to the Tri-kandaśeṣa (C. 1300 A. D.), Nivṛtti is another name of Gauḍa. Lakṣmanasena was king of Gauḍa in the latter part of the twelfth century. So this country was not under Kāmarupa then. Again if the *Tarikh-I-Firishtah* (Lucknow Edition, p. 293) is to be believed, Bakhtiyar Khiliji himself founded Rangpur on the border of Bengal. So there was little possibility of a Kāmarupa

king erecting fortifications outside his territory, on the other side of a formidable river like the Brahmaputra. We do not know if there is any evidence forth-coming to support the theory.

Now let us examine the story of the king Jalpeśvara founding the Jalpiśa temple. We doubt if there is any evidence older than the *Yoginītantra* of the sixteenth century. In the *Kālikāpurāṇa* (Ch. 77) it is said that Nandi by performing austerities before this Jalpiśa *linga* obtained his attendantship, and that it is situated in the northwest of Kāmarūpa. It is further stated that it existed even at the time of Parasurāma, whoever he may be. This scene of asceticism of Nandi is called Jāpyeśvara, in *Sivapurāṇa* (Sanatkumāra-saṁhita, ch. 74). It also occurs in the *Linga-Vaṛāha* and the *Kurma-purāṇas* (*Geo. Dic.*). All these Mahā-purāṇas are surely earlier than the *Yoginītantra*. The *Śivapurāṇa* is mentioned in the Madanpālā grant of king Viśvarūpa-sena of the thirteenth century (*Bengal Inscriptions*, Vol. III, p. 139). Most probably this 'Jāpyeśvara', in course of time changed to 'Jalpeśvara', 'Jalpeśa' and 'Jalpiśa'. If any king of Kāmarūpa founded this *linga*, possibly did, he must be of very early period, and cannot belong to the thirteenth century. That the reputation of this place as Nandi-mahā-tīrtha reached as far as Vijayanagara in the fifteenth century is apparent from the fact that its kings made gifts to this *tīrtha* in Nivṛtti country. (*Epigraphia Carnatica*, Vol. III, Māṇḍya Taluq *Inscription No 55*)

After taking all these into consideration, we venture to suggest that this Maharaja Pṛthu of the tradition is, in all probability, the father of feudatory king Viśākhadatta, the poet of *Mudra-Rākṣasa*. The *Mleccha* menace, hinted at in the last verse of the drama, refers to this attack by the Kicakas. Probably the dynasty which occupied the throne of Bhāskaravarman's successors were of the Kicaka origin, although they too claimed to be the descendants of Bhagadatta. Buchanan has placed this Pṛthu before the eighth century and this well suits our identification. Bartu and this Pṛthu must be two different persons.*

* We find another mention of a king Pṛthu in the Bhoja dynasty of Bengal, as given in the *Ain-I-Akbari* (Vol. II, pp. 144-6 -- Jarrett). The existence of this dynasty in Bengal cannot be brushed aside lightly, as a myth, when we find mention of a place named Bhojakata in Gauda-deśa (*Skanda purāṇa*, Nāgarkhaṇḍa, ch. 199, verse 132). The name Bhojakata indicates a city of the Bhojas. Abul Fazl has placed this Bhoja dynasty immediately before Adisūra. So chronologically also there is nothing against identifying this Pṛthu with the father of poet Viśākhadatta (c. 650-700 A.D.)

A REJOINDER.

(BY K. L. BARUA).

Buchanan in his Account of Rangpur published only a tradition about Raja Prthu which has not much historical value except perhaps the fact that a king named Prthu once ruled over Kāmarupa. We find the mention of Bartu or Britu in the *Tabaquat-i-Nasiri* and the translator, Raverty, supposes that Bartu or Britu referred to Prthu. Sir Wolsely Haig, in the Cambridge History of India Vol. III, has identified this Prthu with a king of Kāmarupa of the thirteenth century A. D. because no other Hindu king or military leader of Northern India of that period is known to have destroyed vast hordes of Muslim invaders. The king of Kāmarupa not only caused the destruction of the entire army of Mahammad Ibn Bukhtiyar in 1206 A. D. but, a few years after, he repulsed the invading army of Iwaz with heavy loss. Sir Wolsely Haig is therefore correct in identifying this Prthu mentioned by Minhaj with the king of Kāmarupa. I have therefore in my "Early History of Kāmarupa" taken this Prthu to be the same as the Prthu mentioned by Buchanan. One reason for doing so is that Buchanan makes mention of three dynasties of kings ruling successively in Kāmarupa or Kamatā before the end of the fifteenth century. The last dynasty was of three kings founded by Niladvaj. We know that the last king of this dynasty, named Nilambar, was overthrown by Alauddin Hussein Shah in 1498 A. D. I have, in my book, identified the next preceding dynasty with that founded by a king named Sandhyā who ruled about the middle of the thirteenth century. The names of Sandhyā and his successors have been found from the *Guru Charitra*, a book compiled in the sixteenth century and also from the writings of Hema Saraswati, Kaviratna Saraswati and Hāribor Bipra, all Kāmarupi poets of the fourteenth century whose works have already been published. Dharmapāla alias Dharmanārāyan, mentioned by Buchanan, belonged to this dynasty which began to rule soon after the disappearance of Rājā Prthu who must therefore be placed in the first half of the thirteenth century. Thus Rājā Prthu of Buchanan's tradition comes to be the same as Britu or Prithu of the *Tabaquat-i-Nasiri*.

Much emphasis need not be laid on the statement of Buchanan that Jalpeśvar built the temple of Jalpeth. It may be that he simply rebuilt the temple which may have been previously destroyed by an earthquake. It is not known who originally founded the

temple. Assam, North-Bengal and North-Bihar have always been seismic areas. We have it from the inscription of king Vanamālarman, of the ninth century, that he reconstructed the Himalaya-like lofty temple of Hātaka Śūlin which had fallen down. I identified Jalpeśvar with Prthu as the "Kāmarupar Buranji", an old chronicle published by the Department of Historical Studies in Assam, states that Prthu was the other name of Jalpeśvar. I have explained in my book that in the old days the term "melchha" was applied to the people of Bodo tribes and that one tribe of them still bears the name "Mech" which is only an abbreviation of Mlechha. There is no mention of the term "Kichhak" anywhere in the old records. It seems to be an invention of Buchanan. "Kuvach" or "Kavach" was the Sanskritized name of the "Koch". The people of the Bodo tribes were in no sense untouchables at any time. Even now in Assam good Brahmans take water fetched by a Koch. I can not therefore support the identification of the "Kichhaks" of Buchanan's tradition with the "mlechha" of Ratnapala's inscription or the "mlechha" of "*Mudra Rākshasam*."

Mr. Ghosh makes an astounding statement that the western boundary of Kāmarupa in the thirteenth century was the river Brahmaputra. I am afraid no historian will take this statement seriously. Even during the reign of Naranāyana, king of Kāmarup in the sixteenth century, Rangpur and Jalpaiguri, not to speak of Cooch Behar were within his kingdom. The Karatoyā has always been the western boundary of Kāmarupa. In its northern reaches it is still to the west of Jalpaiguri and forms the boundary between Purnea and Jalpaiguri. The fact is that the whole of the northern belt of modern Bengal was within Kāmarupa at least till the beginning of the seventeenth century. Gauda was to the immediate south of this belt. I would refer Mr. Ghosh to the map of Kāmarupa, Gauda and Mithilā published in the "Indian Culture" (Vol. I No. 3 p. 432).

The identification of Avantivarman, mentioned in the last sloka of the *Mudra Rākshasam* (certain editions) with a son of Bhāskaravarman stands on more sure foundations. The credit for this hit is due to Mr. Ghosh. In my book I have strengthened this identification by additional evidence. I shall refer here to another piece of circumstantial evidence. It appears that Bhāskaravarman was a life-long bachelor on account of which he was styled *Kumara* till the end. In the *Harṣa Carita* also his contemporary Bānabhatta describes him as "*Bhāṣma iva Kumāra*". It is mentioned in Dāmodara Gupta's *Kuttanimata*, written in the last quarter of the eighth century A. D., that he had a

favourite courtesan who, on his death, immolated herself on the burning pyre, contrary to the injunctions of the deceased king, being unable to bear the grief at the demise of her lord.* This is, I consider, an important piece of historical information for which I am indebted to Mr. K. K. Handique, M. A. (Oxon), Principal, Jorhat College, who drew my attention to the reference in the *Kuttanimata*. It may be that before his death Bhāskaravarman had abdicated his throne in favour of a son of this courtesan in order to avoid a dispute as regards succession. We know definitely that some other Kāmarupa kings, following him, adopted the same device. On ascending the throne the new king assumed the name Avantivarman. After Bhāskaravarman's death some members of the royal family refused to recognize the claims of Avantivarman, to the throne and one of them, Śālastambha, fomented a rebellion of the *mlechha* subjects who always constituted the finest soldiery of the Kingdom of Kāmarupa even down to the end of the sixteenth century, as we know from Muslim accounts. Avantivarman was overpowered and Śālastambha usurped the throne as mentioned in Ratnapālavarman's inscription where it is stated that the *mlechha* *dhinatha* secured the kingdom by a turn of fate (Vidhi Calana Vasāt). Viśākhadatta probably completed his drama when Avantivarman was still on the insecure throne menaced by the *mlechha* rising. This, of course, is a conjecture.

It is not improbable that Śālastambha was himself a *mlechha* though the renowned Śrī Harṣa Deva, who belonged to his dynasty, is described, in the Nepal inscription of Jayadeva, as a descendant of Bhagadatta. In the eighteenth century Bharat Singh, the Matak leader who usurped the Ahom throne, also claimed descent from Bhagadatta.† In the inscription of Ratnapāla it is stated that on the termination of the line of kings following Śālastambha the people elected Brahmapāla, of the real *Bhauma* dynasty, as their king and this took place, about the end of the tenth century A. D. Further it is found from the inscription of Harjjaravarman that an explanation was given for the designa-

*“भास्कर वर्मणि याते सुर वसति वारितापि भूपतिना ।

तदुःख मसहमाना प्रविशेश विलासिनी दहनम् ॥

† The following is the legend on Bharat Singh's coin minted in 1718 Saka :—

“श्रीमगदस कुलोद्भव श्री भरथ सिंह नृपस्य शाके १७१८ ।”

tion *mlechha* applied to the dynasty to which that king belonged. Unfortunately the plate which contained the explanation is still missing and all search to find it out has so far been of no avail.

It is true that, as stated in the *Mudrarākshasa*, Viśakhadatta was the son of Mahārājā Bhāskaradatta and grandson of a *Sāmanta* named Bateswara Datta. It is also true that this Bhāskara Datta was known also as Mahārājā Prthu. The patron of Viśakhadatta was however a king named Avantivarman who was menaced by *mlechhas*. There is no mention of Viśakhadatta's father Prthu being menaced by *mlechhas*. Buchanan's Prthu was a king of Kāmarūpa and an independent king. How is it therefore possible to identify this Prthu with Maharaja Bhāskara Datta alias Prthu, the father of Viśakhadatta? Several kings assumed the *Biruda* name Prthu, like Bhāskara Datta, who, was evidently the feudatory chief of a particular locality under the suzerain king Avantivarman, the successor of king Bhāskara-varman.

BUDDHISM IN ASSAM—A REJOINDER.

(BY RAI BAHADUR AMARNA' H RAY).

In his short note on 'Buddhism in Assam', J. A. R. S., Vol. III, No. 4, Pandit Paulmanath Bhattacharya Vidvavinod attempts to refute the opinion previously expressed by the learned Editor of the journal that Kāmarūpa and Sylhet were, at one time, centres of Vajrayāna Buddhism ⁽¹⁾. The learned Pandit begins his note with his conclusion as follows:—"I have always been of opinion that there was no Buddhism in Assam". Later on, in a footnote he adds, "while following the materials for the compilation of 'Srihatter Itivritta' nothing could be found to show that there was any trace of Buddhism in Sylhet". One cannot be expected to change his opinion of a life-time easily.

Everybody is grateful to the learned Pandit for his valuable, if partial, contributions to the histories of Kāmarūpa and Sylhet, and the present writer has no pretensions either to scholarship or to intimate familiarity with the history of those parts of the country. As a student of Indian Religion and Philosophy, he makes bold to put forward a few points for the consideration of the learned Pandit.

(1) See 'Vajrayāna and Kāmarūpa'—J. A. R. S., Vol. II, No 2.

The manner in which Pandit Vidyavinod seeks to make light of the reference to Kāmarūpa and Sylhet as centres of Vajrayāna in the 'Sādhnamālā' does not carry conviction. He seems to say that the author of the 'Sādhnamālā' learnt from the 'Kālikāpurāṇa' that portions of the Sati's body fell at Uddiyana, Pūrṇagiri and Kāmarūpa and from some other source that a portion also fell at Sylhet and tried to pass off these Hindu Pīṭhas as centres of Vajrayāna. He adduces to evidence to show that the Kālikāpurāṇa, an Eastern-Indian Upapurāṇa of recent date, was older than the Sādhnamālā. Could it not be that the Hindu and the Buddhist Tantrik cults flourished in these places side by side though one might have preceded the other and that after some struggle for supremacy Vajrayāna went down to all outward appearances?

Then the Pandit lays down the following dictum without backing it by reasoning of any sort. He says, "Vajrayāna is a compromise that the decaying (and vanquished) Buddhism made with the Hindu Tantras : yet, also this attempt at galvanizing the dying faith did not avail anything—it had to go and it has gone". The history of the rise and development of Tantrikism in India has yet to be written. Some people, more conservative than scientific in their outlook on men and things, in their eagerness to Aryanize the Tantras trace their origin to the Atharvaveda forgetting that there is an influential body of opinion characterising the Atharvaveda itself as mainly non-Aryan stuff written in the Vedic dialect and furnished with just a veneer of Aryanism by the incorporation of some Vedic hymns. There are Magic and Incantations in the Atharvaveda but nobody has proved till this day that their Tantrik counterparts were borrowed from them. So eminent a scholar and Indologist as the late M. M. Haraprasad Śāstri had nothing but ridicule for those who would trace all sorts of crudities and vulgarities to this fourth Veda—which took a long time to attain the status of a Veda. In his opinion Tantrikism was an exotic introduced into India from the countries to her north about the sixth and seventh centuries A. D. If his contention were correct, Buddhism which had spread into those countries long before this period must have had an earlier contact with Tantrikism than Hinduism. Far from Buddhism copying Hindu Tantrikism the truth seems to lie the other way. To this day there has been no comparative critical study of the two sets of Tantras which alone might enable one to declare in favour of the priority in time of either of them.

M. M. Haraprasad succeeded in discovering how Buddhism was still lingering hidden in the midst of the popular religious institutions of Bengal; and Sylhet is ethnologically in Bengal while Kāmarūpa too is not a far cry therefrom. Patient research by one free from the old Brahmanical bias as also from the Aryan bias, introduced by Max Muller, is likely to unraval Buddhist institutions still lingering in Kāmarūpa and Sylhet. May I request the learned Pandit to consider whether the Sahajiyā and the Ratikhowa cults, prevalent in Sylhet and Kāmarūpa respectively, are not remnants of the Buddhist Sahajayāna? Is he aware of any Sahajiyā literature older than the Sahajayāna works we know of? Then, again, could not the elasticity of caste among the Non-Brahmans of the Assam valley be a legacy of the prevalent Buddhism of the past?

I am sure Pandit Vidyavinod will be far from denying that Bengal was, at one time, a stronghold of Buddhism. Long before the Navya-Nyāya was introduced into Bengal, great Buddhist philosophers flourished in that Province. Thanks to M. M. Haraprasad and Dr. S. N. Dasgupta, we know today a good deal about the glorious contributions to Indian Philosophy of the great Bengal Buddhist philosophers, Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla. Vajrayāna flourished at one time in several parts of the Dacca district, especially Vikramapura, where the great Atiśa, also known as Dīpaṃkara, was born, where several Buddhistic relics have been found and which is still proud of its great village Vajrayoginī bearing in its very name the tradition of the past prevalence of Vajrayāna there. Buddhism enjoyed the patronage of several ruling dynasties of Bengal. It was easy for Buddhism to migrate from Bengal to Kāmarūpa and from Dacca to Sylhet. It requires too much imagination to suppose that Buddhist missionaries, who penetrated as far east as China, never thought of converting Kāmarūpa and Sylhet so much nearer home.

May I ask the learned Pandit in what manner "the Great Śāṅkarācārya swept Buddhism clear out of India" and what evidence is there in support of a statement so sweeping? We have been hearing, since we were mere boys, that Śāṅkara achieved this feat but no evidence appears forthcoming to this day. Later on, we heard of a story, current in Nepal, that Śāṅkara used to have carried with him a large iron-pan in which he would fry to death Buddhist opponents vanquished in debate, that he suffered defeat while in Nepal and was fried to death in his turn. I am sure this story is not responsible for the Pandit's sweeping state-

ment, for it is not history. The Śāṅkaravijayas do not, to my knowledge, speak of Śāṅkara having engaged in *vicāra* with any Buddhist, a fact noticed by Pandit Rajendranath Ghosh Vedānta-bhūṣaṇa in his monumental work, 'Śāṅkara and Rāmaṇuja'. Śāṅkara, in his commentary on the Brahmasūtras, does criticise certain Buddhist schools with his characteristic vigour and even goes the length of ridiculing the Buddha as indulging in unconnected delirium; but this could hardly have swept Buddhism out of India any more than the much older sūtras themselves, which were aimed against Buddhism, had achieved that feat. Why should Advaitānanda, in his 'Brahmavidyabharaṇa', and Śrīharaṣa, in his 'Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhāḍya', been at so much pains to refute Buddhism if that stuff had already been swept out? What business had Uḍiṇa to evolve the New Nyāya and to refute Buddhism in his 'Kusumañjali' if Śāṅkara had swept Buddhism out a century before? The Pandit ascribes a rather less important role to our Muslim rulers than he should have done in the matter of the suppression of Buddhism. We learn from the 'Caitanya-candrodayanāṭakam' by Kavikarṇapūra (Act VIII) that Buddhism was flourishing in Southern India even in Śrī Caitanya's time.

That the disappearance of Buddhism from the land of its birth was due mainly to Brahmanism assimilating much of it and furnishing a more acceptable faith is a fact which most people now-a-days admit. The doctrine of Ahimsā and the partiality for Vegetarianism have been derived mainly from Buddhism and Jainism. The debt of Śāṅkara Vedānta to Buddhism can hardly be denied. It is not without reason that Śāṅkara has been stigmatized as a hidden Buddhist. Bhāskara, in his commentary on the Brahmasūtras, characterises Śāṅkara's philosophy as tinged with Mahāyāna Buddhism. Śāṅkara's doctrine of Māyā is traceable to the Upaniṣads, but he had a ready-made development of it in Mahāyāna Buddhism. He owes his twofold division of reality into Vyāvahārika and Pāramārthika to the Mahāyānists; his indebtedness to Gaṇḍapāla, supposed to have been his *paramaguru*, but in reality a much older teacher of the same school, is acknowledged by himself. Gaṇḍapāla is stated to have been at first a Buddhist who later on turned an Aupaniṣad. Any one who has studied his Kārikās must have observed that he looked like attempting a synthesis between Mahāyāna Buddhism and the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. He mentions the Buddha more than once, and he begins the fourth *prakaraṇa* with a saluta-

tion to the Buddha. The commentator on the Kārikās, most certainly not the great Śaṅkara in spite of the Puspikā, attempts to explain away the terms 'Buddha' and 'Sambuddha', but without success. Some of the kārīkāḥ have been proved to have been borrowed from the Mūlamadhyamaka Kārikās of Nāgārjuna and a few others are found quoted in a later Buddhist work. Gauḍapāda uses in his kārīkāḥ a large number of Buddhistic philosophical terms not to be found in Brahmanical philosophical works, and the commentator has failed to interpret most of them correctly.⁽¹⁾ Then, again, the Buddha came to be recognised by the Hindus as an Avatāra even before the date of the compilation of the South Indian recension of the Mahābhārata. So this was how Buddhism was wiped off. To write an elaborate history of the process would require devoted work for one's whole lifetime. I confess I am unequal to and ill-equipped for the task.

That we have got accustomed to trace, without rhyme or reason, every bit of Brahmanical belief, old or new, to the Vedas and to look upon Buddhism as a faith which was not influenced by previous Vedic thought or which failed in its turn to influence latterday Brahmanism is due as much to our want of knowledge as to the lack of a true historical outlook.

(1) The dialectics employed by Gauḍapāda are exactly those of Nāgārjuna.

DIGAROO-PLATES.

(BY R. M. NATH, B.E.)

Two sets of plates—one containing six and the other three—were found in the house of a Mikir—a hill tribe-man near Digaroo (a Railway Station on the A. B. Railway) in the Kamrup District. These have been in the house of the Mikir for generations and are preserved as a sacred relic. The Mikir has got the family-title of "Barua" given by some king of Assam—whether Ahom or Kachari nobody can say—to one of his ancestors.

The first set of plates consists of six brass plates plain and regular in shape varying from 7" to 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " in length and 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ "

to 4" in breadth and $1\frac{1}{32}$ " in thickness. Writing has been done in ink, the colour of the ink is black with reddish tinge. Some letters in some plates have been attempted to be engraved with a chisel. Each plate contains 9 to 12 lines of writing on each side. The plates are not linked together, nor is there any hole or ring attached to them for linking them together ; they have neither been numbered to show their serial order.

The second set consists of three brass plates plain but irregular in shape, average size being $3\frac{3}{8}$ " long, $1\frac{1}{2}$ " wide and $1\frac{1}{32}$ " thick. They are linked together by two lines of copper chains of three rings each so that when the plates are stretched out the whole thing covers a length of 12".

Each plate contains 12 to 15 lines of writing on each side, writing is in ink as in the bigger plates.

The owner of the plates does not like to part with them on any account, and they were handed over to me for a few days only on the understanding that nothing will be done to deprive him of the proud privilege of possessing an ancient relic of his ancestors.

Photographs of all the plates except one side of the big one which has become quite blurred and indistinct, have been taken.

The letters of the plates show a distinct peculiarity of having a mixture of Sanskrit, Brahmi and modern Bengali and Assamese alphabets, and when the plates are deciphered, it is hoped, they will throw some new light on the history of ancient Assam.*

*A photograph of one of the plates was sent by us to Pandit Padmanath Bhattacharya Vidyavinod, the decipherer of the Nidhanpur and other plates. He could not decipher the writing. [Ed., J. A. R. S.]

THE 'HĀRĀVALĪ'.

(SY AMARNATH RAY.)

I wish to draw the attention of Sanskrit scholars to Mr. S. C. Goswami's interesting paper on 'Some Sanskrit manuscripts found in Kāmarupa' in Vol. III, No. 4, of the J. A. R. S. I have no materials before me for testing the accuracy of Mr. Goswami's

statements about the dates and habitat of the authors of these manuscripts, but in one case he appears to have gone wrong. At p. 121, he mentions a lexicon named 'Hārāvalī' and attributes its authorship to one Mahamahopādhyāya Puruṣottama Vidyāvāgīśa who is said to also been the author of the 'Prayogaratnamālā', a work on Grammar, stated, at p. 122, to have been written during the reign of the Koch king Naranārāyaṇa. I wonder if this 'Hārāvalī' is the same as the 'Hārāvalī', a lexicon of rare words by Puruṣottamadeva, a Bengal Buddhist writer, who is also the author of the 'Trikaṇḍāśeṣa', a supplement to the celebrated lexicon by Amarasimha, and a work on Grammar, the 'Bhāṣāṣṛṭti', ably edited by the late Pandit Srishechandra Chakravarty. Rajendralal Mitra, in his 'Notices of Manuscripts', Vol. II, p. 7, assigns Puruṣottama to the tenth or eleventh century A. D. I may refer Mr. Goswami to Chakravarty's learned introduction to the 'Bhāṣāṣṛṭti' for further information about him. The 'Hārāvalī' is found quoted in the commentary on the 'Lalitātrīṣaṭī', wrongly attributed to the great Saṅkarācārya, but this commentary is undoubtedly much older than King Naranārāyaṇa. The 'Hārāvalī' used to be a very popular work in Bengal and is to be found among every collection of manuscripts in that Province. I found a copy among the Dacca University collections.

RUINS IN LĀUR.

(BY PANDIT PADMANATH BHATTACHARYA VIDYAVINOD. M. A.)

The whilom kingdom of Lāur lay in the north-western part of the district of Sylhet and was almost co-extensive with the present Sunamganj Subdivision. We have no accurate history of this kingdom, but from the biography of Adwaita Probhu—an associate of Śrī Caitanya—we learn that there was a king named Divya Sinha who reigned in Lāur when Adwaita was a boy and lived with his father the minister, of Divya Sinha. Adwaita's birth date was 1356 Sak—1434 A. D. So we may safely premise that Divya Sinha flourished during the first half of the 15th century. We know further that a biographer of Adwaita, named Isāna Nāgara, finished his work—Adwaita Prakāś at Navagrām, the capital of Lāur in Sak 1490—1568 A. D. The descendants of Isāna also lived in Lāur until the kingdom with its capital was destroyed by incessant raids of the Khasis—the denizens of the hills north of Lāur.

Meanwhile, by the middle of the sixteenth century a Laur prince named Ramānāth founded a kingdom for himself which was laterly known as Jagannāthpur from the name of its capital. Almost about the same time a Brahman merchant from Kanauj, named Keśava Miśra, laid the foundation of the kingdom of Baniyāchang. So, by the end of the sixteenth century, there were three kingdoms—Laur (then much diminished in area), Jagannāthpur and Baniyāchang: but Laur was soon after destroyed—as stated already above.

The rulers of Jagannāthpur tried to rescue Laur from the Khasis but with dubious success. A very ambitious and warlike prince of the royal family of Baniyāchang, named Govinda chandra, drove away the Khasis and occupied Laur. He built a fortified palace (*Habilee*) * about 4 miles from the site of Navagrām, the old capital, then in ruins, that had stood very near the foot of the Khasi hills. Govinda soon became the king of Baniyāchang also. Elated by his success in Laur, he defied the authority of the Emperor of Delhi: and though at first he attained some success, he was ultimately carried to Delhi where he embraced Islam to save his life. It is said, he married a lady of the Imperial harem and returned to Baniyāchang with a powerful Mussalman retinue. Govinda—now named Habib Khan—flourished by the last part of seventeenth century. He lived in Laur usually and also in Baniyāchang occasionally. So did his successors, until by the middle of the eighteenth century, the *Habilee* in Laur was abandoned on account of frequent Khasia raids that disturbed the peace of that locality. There had been flourishing *bustis* near about the *Habilee*—and all of them have now almost disappeared; Brahmangrām—the foremost of them all—somehow existed up to 1897 when it was destroyed by the great earthquake. The locality of the ruined *Habilee* is even now known by the name of Brahmangrām.

In March last, I went to Laur to bathe in Panātirtha which commemorate the piety of Adwaita. In order to fulfil the desire of his mother to bathe in various *Tirthas* like Gangā, Yamunā, etc, etc. Adwaita, by the force of his penance, summoned all the *Tirthas* here, on the Vārūni Day (*i.e.*, on the 13th day of the waning moon in Chaitra): thenceforth, people from far and near assemble here on the Vārūni day to purify themselves by an ablution in this *tirtha*—called Panātirtha on account of agreement (Pana) made by the *tirthas* to come here every year on that day.

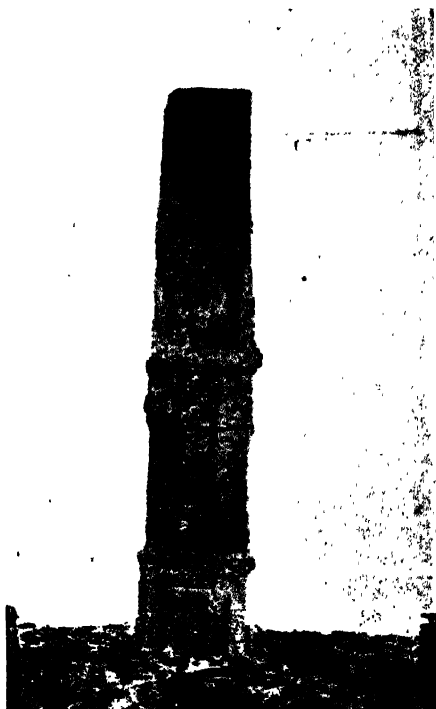
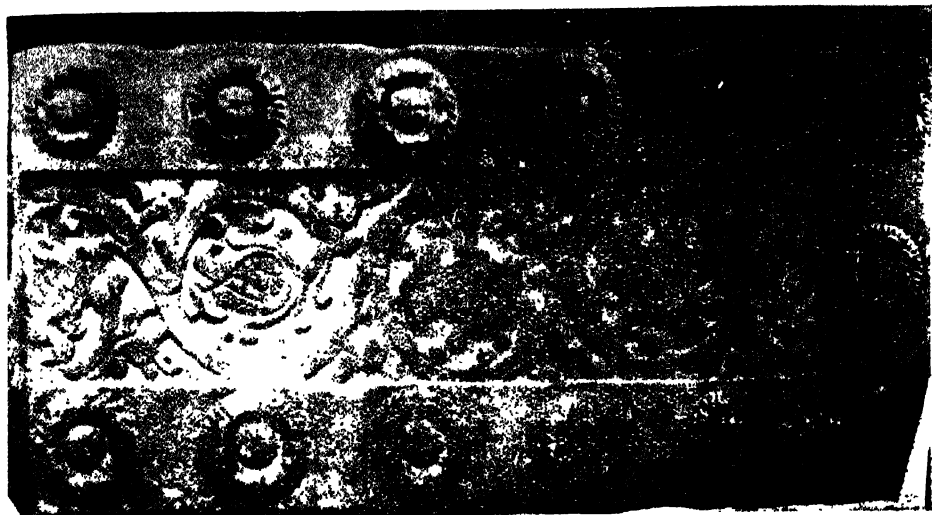
* It is interesting that the Assamese word is "Howli"—(Ed. J. A. R. S.)

On the bank of this Panātirtha* river had stood the old capital Navagrām. About 50 years ago some pious Vaishnavas began their attempt to localize the birth place of Adwaita. Recently an *Asrama* has been established here by Srijit Ramanimohan Goswami of Ātunājān, Sylhet. I visited the *Asrama* and was glad to learn that Rai Bahadur Amarnath Rai—Zamindar of the locality—had donated land in aid of its maintenance. The palace, is said, stood near the *Asrama* and has on account of corrosion by the river Pānatirtha, disappeared now. I could only see a few blocks of bricks and mortar mixed with pebbles and a couple of squared stones in the river-bed which probably belonged to the palace buildings. The Goswami of the *Asrama* has kept a few momentos, in the shape of some ornamented bricks, that may eventually be preserved in the proposed hall of the recently started Sāhitya Parishat in Sylhet. The Goswami says that good many stones, pillars, etc., have been carried away by the people of Lāur and I *suspect* that some might have been carried away to a much further locality—viz., Baniyāchang—where, there are seen scattered many pillars and blocks of stones,† which had formed parts of buildings.

On my return journey, I went to visit the ruins of the Baniyāchang *Habilee* in company with two persons who had visited it more than once before. The whole place is covered with dense jungle and we had to engage the services of two Muhamadans who, with *dao* (long knife) in hand, made a rough way—not more than two feet wide—for us. We entered the ruined *Habilee* by the eastern gate: the wall—now much damaged—that surrounded the palace—was about 7 feet high and 3 feet thick. Here also, as at Navagrām, the bricks and mortar had pebbles mixed with them. We toiled on slowly—very slowly indeed—through the narrow opening, fearing lest we trod over a reptile or get the ominous scent of a ferocious quadruped. The first thing that we came across was a whilom Nahbat Khānā and then a few dilapidated buildings—until we reached one that had been most probably a Baitak-khāna; it had two stair-cases leading to the top of the building which was in a tolerably preserved condition—though the roof was awfully fractured. We had to put a sudden stop to our proceeding farther as the

* Lower down this river is known as Jādukātā. [Ed., J. A. R. S.]

† Fascimiles of two of them, one a pillar, the other, an ornamented slab, are exhibited here.



RUINS IN LĀUR.

Muhammadan pilots would not go ahead any more ; it might be they were afraid of something which they did not tell us lest our retreat was disorderly through scare ! Thus we could inspect only a corner of the ruined palace. We had heard of a building that was in a fair state of preservation—which had been used as a gosal-khana (bathing house) by the ladies of the palace ; and also, of a subterraneous fort that could accommodate not less than 500 soldiers in it. But notwithstanding our solicitude for visiting them we had to come out of the ruins with our desire unfulfilled. My companions said that we had entered by a wrong gate and that if we could enter by the western gate, we might have easily seen them as they were located in that side of the palace. That would be the way if we came from Taherpur about 7 miles south from the *Habilee*. We travelled from east (i. e., Panatirtha) and so had to enter by the eastern gate.

It must be stated here that although the place had been visited by many a people no one cared to publish any accounts of his visit. The *Habilee* was deserted about two hundred years ago and so time has done its usual havoc. Probably after a few decades, the whole *Habilee* will be reduced to heaps of rubbish covered with an utterly impenetrable jungle. So it is now necessary to preserve what still remains, and the *Habilee* should soon come under the jurisdiction of the Act for the preservation of ancient monuments. From what has already been described, it will be evident that the *Habilee* has some connection with the past history of this part of the district of Sylhet, and so it must not be allowed to be entirely obliterated.*

*We draw the attention of the Superintendent of Archaeology, Eastern Circle, to this note by Pandit Vidyavinod. We ourselves visited the ruins some thirty years ago and we can therefore strongly recommend the conservation of these ruins by the Archaeological Department. It is no doubt true that this Department is now handicapped for want of funds but we must point out that this Department has, so far, done very little to explore and preserve the antiquities of Assam. [Ed J. A. R. S.]

AN ASSAMESE SOURCE OF MOGHUL HISTORY.

(BY THE EDITOR.)

The Assamese word for history in "Buranji". It is one of the very few words in the Assamese language borrowed from the Ahoms. The literal meaning of the word is "a store that teaches

the ignorant " (*Bu*, " ignorant persons ", *ran*, " teach " and *jā*, " store or granary ").* The Ahoms were endowed with a keen historical instinct. I quote the following from the Introduction to Gait's History of Assam :—

" The Ahoms were a tribe of Shans who migrated to Assam early in the thirteenth century. They were endowed with the historical faculty in a very high degree ; and their priests and leading families possessed *Buranjis*, or histories, which were periodically brought up to date. These were written on oblong strips of bark and were carefully preserved and handed down from father to son. * * * * * The historicity of these *Buranjis* is proved not only by the way in which they support each other, but also by the confirmation which is afforded by the narratives of Muhammadan writers, wherever these are available for comparison."

All *Buranjis* were not however written by Ahoms only nor were they all written in the Ahom language. The Assamese non-Ahoms also acquired the faculty from the Ahoms. They also wrote *Buranjis* dealing with the Ahom period and some dealing with the earlier period also. Those dealing with the pre-Ahom period are mostly based on traditions because, prior to the advent of the Ahoms, there were no regular chroniclers of events. These traditional accounts make no mention of such illustrious Kānarupa kings as Bhāskaravarman or Śrī Harṣa Varman though they purport to give us a list of the kings who ruled after Bhagadatta.

The Assamese were not content with writing the history of their own country only. They wrote *Buranjis* dealing with the histories of Jaintia, Cooch-Bihar, Tippera and Hedāmba. The *Padshāh-Buranji*, written in Assamese, is an attempt at chronicling the history of Muhammadan rule in India beginning from the downfall of Hindu supremacy in Northern India, towards the end of the twelfth century, down to the second half of the seventeenth century when perhaps the *Buranji* was compiled. This book has just been published by the Assam Research Society with funds kindly placed at its disposal by the Education Minister of Assam, the Hon'ble Maulvi Abdul Hamid. It is very ably edited by Professor Rai Bahadur S. K. Bhuyan, a prominent

* History of Assam, by E. A. Gait. Introduction to First Edition p. x.

member of the Society, who has collated the text from four different manuscripts, written a very illuminating introduction covering 21 pages and has also appended a bibliography. The book as published is therefore one of the many valuable gifts of Professor Bhuyan's labour of love for which the Assamese public will ever remain grateful to him.

As stated by Professor Bhuyan, the book "does not aim at a connected survey of the period; it only embodies a number of episodes connected with the Greater Timurids, sufficient to convey an idea of the courts at Delhi and Agra, of the strategy and the war-methods of the Moghuls and of the contemporary Rajas and Sultans wielding authority in several parts of India." As regards the sources for the information contained in this book Mr. Bhuyan writes:—"The Assam-Moghul conflicts brought to Assam a number of Moghul subjects equipped with the full repertory of fact-lore dealing with the Badshas of Delhi and Rajas of Hindustan. Besides, Assamese ambassadors had visited the capitals of Delhi and Agra where they had observed the splendour and magnificence of the Moghul Court and were impelled by a natural desire to communicate what they saw and heard to their home-keeping countrymen. * * * * When the historically minded Assamese were brought face to face with Moghul India, the romantic episodes of the Badshas, Begums, Omras, Mansabdars and Rajas treasured in the court-chronicles of the day, or in the memory of reliable eye witnesses and reporters were recorded by the Assamese for the enlightenment of their countrymen. Thus the *Padshah Buranji* served the ends of political vigilance as well as the intellectual curiosity of the Assamese people at a time when their virility and alertness combined with their anxiety to imbibe and assimilate the spirit of foreign culture enabled them to maintain their solidarity and independence against the aggressive imperialism of the Moghuls."

It is interesting to note that Shivaji is mentioned in this book as *Sewā-Rāja*. It is also stated in this book that Ram Singh, the son of Raja Jaysingh of Amber, was sent to conquer Assam from the Ahoms as a punishment for his connivance at the escape of Shivaji from captivity at Agra. This is supported by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in his "History of Aurangzeb".

The name of the author cannot be found out but Prof. Bhuyan thinks that he was a Hindu and not an Assamese Muhammadan. The *Katahis* or ambassadors were usually Brahman,

not only during the Ahom *regime* but also previously. The illustrious ambassador sent by Bhāskaravarman to Śrī Harṣa, in the seventh century A. D., was a Brahman, Haṅgsavega, whose name has been immortalized by Bānabhatta in his *Harṣa Charita*.

REVIEWS.

PERIODICALS.

Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. I, 1935, No. 3—

This issue contains a contribution from Dr. N. K. Bhattachali on the "Location of the land granted by the Nidhanpur grant of Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarūpa (early 7th century A. D.)". The writer tries to refute our theory that the donated lands must be located near an old channel of the Kosi (Kauśikā) somewhere in the modern district of Purnea or in Morang within the borders of Nepal. According to him the "Kauśikā", mentioned in the inscription, is to be identified with the Kuśārā of Sylhet and the donated lands located in Panchakhanda within the Karimganj Subdivision. This subject has been discussed almost threadbare in the "Indian Culture" and it has been conclusively proved that the Kuśārā of Sylhet can not be the Kauśikā mentioned in the grant and therefore the donated lands were not in that district. It is unnecessary to revert here to this subject as Dr. Bhattachali has not brought out any good fresh evidence in support of his theory. His interpretation of the word "Dumbarichheda" is so fantastic that we wonder how he could seriously advance it.

Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol XII, No. 1, March 1936—

Babu Pramode Lal Paul contributes an article on "South-eastern Bengal in Ancient Times" in which the writer makes the astounding statement that Bhāskaravarman did not actually occupy Karnaśuvarna but that in one of his journeys from Kāmarūpa to Kanauj *via* Karnaśuvarna he issued his Nidhanpur charter from the last named place. The writer evidently forgets that this charter was issued from the "Victorious camp at Karnaśuvarna" (1), and not from a mere halting stage. Besides, the route to Kanauj from Kāmarūpa did not lie through Karnaśuvarna. Prejudices die hard, but historical research subordinated by prejudice is of no value whatever.

(1) "स्वस्ति महानो हस्तऽथ पत्ति सम्पत्कृति जय शब्दार्थ स्कन्धबारात् कर्न सुवर्न वासकात्"—Kāmarūpa Śāśanāvali p. 11.

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FURTHER OPINIONS ON THE "EARLY HISTORY OF KĀMARUPA".

DR. B. A. SALETORÉ, M.A., Ph.D., D. PHIL.—I have gone through your valuable book and cannot but admire your patience and skill in unravelling the early history of a province which has preserved its antiquities in tact. * * * This critical and most complete account of early Kāmarupa based as it is on all available sources of information, is a distinct contribution to the history of ancient India. * * * Your remarks on Tantrism (pp. 156 seq.) are highly interesting. Deep erudition and balanced judgment mark this most remarkable achievement of yours.

MR. H. E. STAPLETON, M.A.—"I have seldom read a more helpful and suggestive history. It is in this respect a most pleasant improvement on another "History of Assam" which I found so full of obvious mistakes, when it appeared, that I had to decline to review it for the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

* * * * *

"You will gather from what I have written how extremely interesting I have found your book, especially as I was able to consult it while preparing my lecture for the Royal Asiatic Society. It was of particular assistance to me when discussing Karnasvarna, and I mentioned in my lecture what an outstanding piece of work I considered your book to be and how pleasant it was to find the President of the Anusandhan Samiti (which kindly some years ago made me one of its Honorary members) publishing a book of such striking historical importance."

NOTICE.

KĀMARUPA ANUSANDHAN SAMITI, GAUHATI.

The Kāmarupa Anusandhan Samitī or the Assam Research Society has a collection of old historical relics, such as inscribed stones and images cannons, cannon-balls, swords, potteries *puthis*, royal costumes coins, etc. The premises of the Samiti, situated on the southern bank of Dighali Tank, Gauhati, remains open from 7-30 to 9-30 A.M. and 3 to 7 P.M. on working days; from 8 to 7 P.M. on Sundays and on Doljatra, Lakshmipuja, and the anniversaries of Damodar Deb Sankar Deb, and Madhab Deb. The Samiti remains closed on the following occasions:—Sri-panchami, Maghbihu, Bahagbihu Id-duz-zaha, Maharam, Janmas-tami, Durgapuja Kalipuja, Christmas Eve, New Year's Day, King-Emperor's Birth-day and Sivaratri.

Information which may lead to the recovery of any historical relic or article will be thankfully received.

D. GOSWAMI.

Honorary Secretary,

Kāmarupa Anusandhan Samiti.